

SNSF Career Tracker Cohorts (CTC)

Newsletter 2019/2

Status of the study

After a very successful start of the SNSF Career Tracker Cohorts (CTC) study in 2018, a new cohort was launched in 2019, which has been equally successful. For the base survey, we invited 1094 applicants for Early Postdoc.Mobility, Postdoc.Mobility, Ambizione, Eccellenza, and PRIMA. We did not contact 72 applicants, as they had already participated in the base survey in fall 2018. Of all invited applicants, 91% took part in the base survey in spring 2019. **We thank all participants for their valuable contribution!**

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First results from the survey in spring 2019

Composition of the cohort

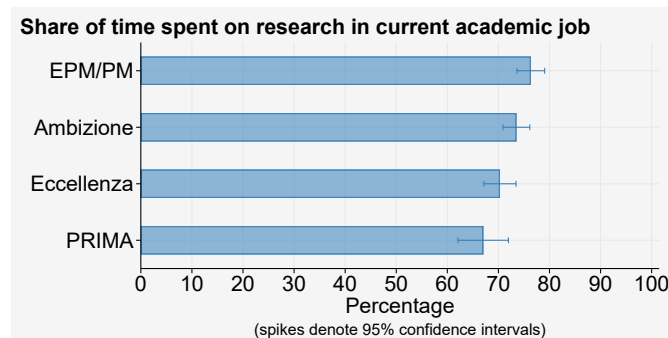
In spring 2019, 1158 people were included in the CTC-19 cohort. Not part of the cohort are all people who had withdrawn their application before the start of the survey or whose application had been rejected for formal reasons. Also not included are people who rejected a transfer of their data from the SNSF to the project team at the University of Bern. Of the candidates in the cohort, 28% applied for Early Postdoc.Mobility and 13% applied for Postdoc.Mobility. Another 30% of the applicants aimed for an Ambizione grant and 20% applied for Eccellenza. Finally, 10% applied for PRIMA, a funding scheme exclusively for female researchers. Across all funding schemes, there were more male (57%) than female (43%)

applicants. The gender imbalance increases with career progression. Thus, for (Early) Postdoc.Mobility, the imbalance is smaller (61% male vs. 39% female) than for Ambizione (66% male vs. 34% female) and for Eccellenza (67% male vs. 33% female). The average age of the applicants is 34, with an age range between 25 and 57. At the time of the application, 71% of the candidates were employed at a research institution in Switzerland and 25% were employed at a research institution abroad (5% unknown). Out of all applications, 37% were in the field of mathematics, natural and engineering sciences, 32% were in the humanities and social sciences, and 31% in biology and medicine.

Research activity: More time for research at earlier stages of the career

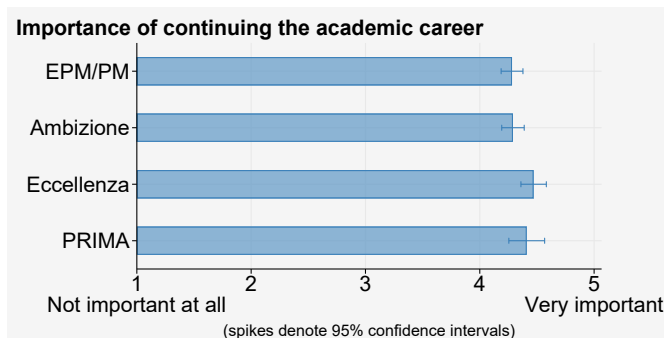
Of all the survey participants who were employed at the time of the base survey (i.e., shortly after their application), 97% reported that they conduct academic research (only people who completed the survey are included in the analysis, N = 996). They were further asked to indicate how much of their work time they use for research, teaching, administrative duties as well as for clinical and other activities. Overall, by far the most time is spent on research (see figure on the right). The applicants for (Early) Postdoc.Mobility spend slightly more time on research (76%) than applicants for other schemes. Applicants for Ambizione use 73% of their time for research, those for Eccellenza 70%. PRIMA applicants show the smallest proportion of research time – although it still amounts to 67% of their total work time (overall test for differences between the funding schemes: $p = 0.005$).

Moreover, the amount of time spent on teaching increases with career progression. While teaching makes up 12% of the work time of applicants for (Early) Postdoc.Mobility, it amounts to 14% for Ambizione applicants, 16% for Eccellenza applicants and 18% for PRIMA applicants (overall test: $p = 0.001$).



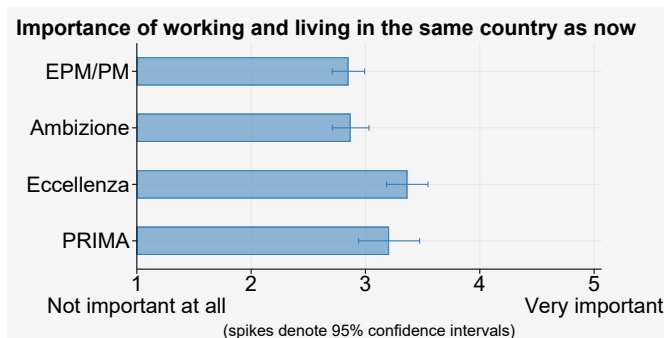
High importance of continuing the academic career

In the survey, the participants were asked to rate the importance of several aspects with regard to their future career. Altogether, the survey participants find it very important to continue their academic career (mean = 4.33, on a scale from 1 to 5). There are virtually no differences among the funding schemes in this regard. The average ratings range from 4.27 for the (Early) Postdoc.Mobility applicants to 4.47 for Eccellenza applicants (overall test: $p = 0.102$).



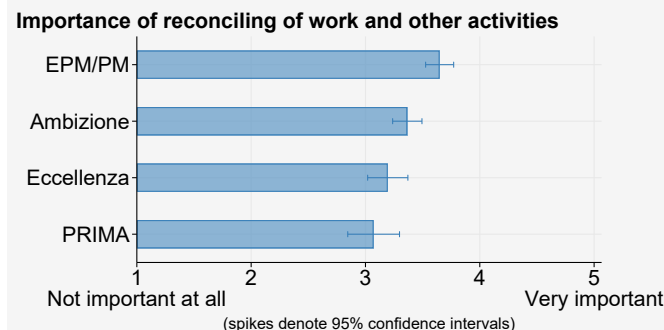
Wish for work place continuity increases with career progression

As far as the country of the work place is concerned, the survey participants said it is moderately important (mean = 3.00) for them to be able to work and live in the same country in the future as now. However, this aspect becomes more important the more advanced the career. Thus, working in the same country as now is more important for applicants for PRIMA (mean = 3.21) and Eccellenza (mean = 3.37) than for applicants for Ambizione (mean = 2.87) and (Early) Postdoc.Mobility (mean = 2.96, overall test: $p < 0.001$).



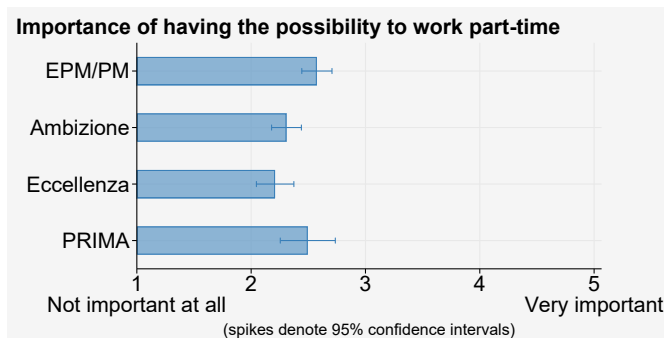
Stronger wish to reconcile work and other activities at early career stages

When asked how important it is for them to be able to reconcile work and other activities in the future, participants gave a moderate average rating of 3.40. Applicants to funding schemes at an earlier career stage evaluated the importance of this item higher than more advanced researchers. For instance, the survey participants who applied for (Early) Postdoc.Mobility rated this aspect as considerably more important (mean = 3.76) than those who applied for PRIMA (mean = 3.07, overall test: $p < 0.001$).



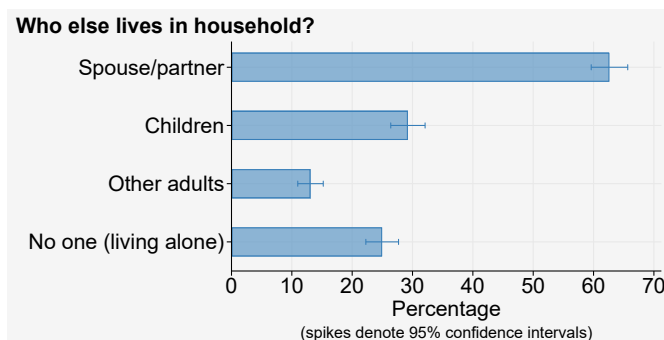
Differences in the importance of being able to work part-time

Interestingly, applicants for (Early) Postdoc.Mobility are the ones who evaluated the importance of being able to work part-time highest (mean = 2.62). It was also of slightly greater importance to applicants for PRIMA (mean = 2.50), compared to Ambizione (mean = 2.31) and Eccellenza applicants (mean = 2.21). Altogether, the survey participants rated the importance of being able to work part-time as moderate (mean = 2.40, overall test: $p = 0.004$).



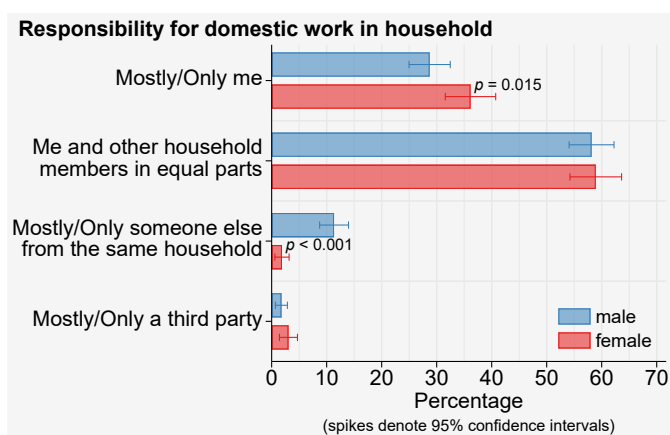
Household composition: two thirds live with partner

In the survey, the participants were asked who else lives in the same household. Roughly two thirds (63%) of the survey participants indicated that they live together with their spouse or partner. Furthermore, 29% reported that there are children in the same household. 13% share the household with other adults and 25% live alone.



Responsibility for domestic work: mostly shared

When asked about responsibilities for domestic work (cleaning, cooking, laundry, shopping, home maintenance, etc.), 59% of the survey participants who live together with other people claimed that they share the responsibility in equal parts. There is a significant gender difference when it comes to cases where one person is mostly or solely responsible. Thus, women more often indicated that only/mostly they themselves are responsible (36% vs. 29% males), and men more often indicated that someone else from the same household is responsible for domestic work (11% vs. 2% females). Very few people (2%) indicated that a third party (e.g., cleaning staff) carries out the domestic work.



Up next

We are looking forward to the next survey waves. In fall 2019, the new applicants for EarlyPostdoc.Mobility and Postdoc.Mobility will be invited to participate in the base

survey of the CTC study. At the same time, we will conduct the first follow-up survey among all participants of the base survey in fall 2018.

About

The Career Tracker Cohorts (CTC) project of the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) is a longitudinal panel study with yearly cohorts. It aims at tracking the career paths of young researchers applying to the SNSF career funding schemes at the postdoctoral level (Early Postdoc.Mobility, Postdoc.Mobility, Ambizione, PRIMA,

and Eccellenza). The main goals of the CTC are to monitor the careers of the researchers and to evaluate the impact of the different career funding schemes of the SNSF.

The SNSF has entrusted a project team from the University of Bern (Institute of Sociology and the Interdisciplinary Centre for Gender Studies) to carry out the study.

For more information see: <http://careertrackercohorts.ch/>

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